

H.R. 5946, the Foster Accountability, Integrity, Trust, and Honor (FAITH) in Congress Act
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Problem

- The American people have [little faith](#) in Congress as an institution. They generally do not trust Members of Congress to work together in a bipartisan way; to place country before party; to put the public interest above their self interest; or to effectively perform the most fundamental part of their job, which is to set a budget and then appropriate taxpayer money in strict accordance with that budget.

Response

- The bipartisan FAITH in Congress Act takes five commonsense steps to help restore the American people's faith in their elected leaders.

Section 1: No Budget, No Pay

- Under a 1974 federal law, Congress has until April 15th of each year to adopt a budget resolution (a fiscal framework) and until October 1st to pass appropriations bills that conform with that budget. Following this schedule is called “regular order.” These days, Congress rarely abides by it, creating a chaotic process that results in flawed policy decisions and, in the worst-case scenario, a government shutdown (which has occurred nearly 20 times since 1974). This section would withhold salaries for Members of Congress if they do not follow regular order, creating the strongest possible incentive for Members to get the congressional budget process on track and run the country in a responsible way.

Section 2: No Automatic Pay Increases

- The annual salary for a Member of Congress is \$174,000. That is three times higher than the U.S. median household income of \$58,000 and nearly 3.5 times higher than the Florida median household income of \$51,000. There is a federal statute that provides for Member pay to be annually “adjusted”—that is, increased. This section would repeal that statute. If Members wish to hike their own pay, they should have to cast an on-the-record vote so the American public can hold them accountable for that vote. There should be no automatic pay increases.

Section 3: No First-Class Travel at Taxpayer Expense

- This section would prohibit Members of Congress on taxpayer-funded travel from using anything other than coach-class accommodations—without exception. If Members want to upgrade their seat, they must use personal funds to do so, just like the people they represent.

Section 4: Lifetime Ban on Lobbying By Former Members of Congress

- This section would prohibit former Members of Congress from becoming paid lobbyists. There is a concern among too many Americans that one reason individuals run for Congress is to set themselves up for a lucrative career in lobbying once their tenure in Congress ends. There is also a concern that current Members of Congress are particularly susceptible to lobbying efforts by their former colleagues. This section would address both of these concerns.

Section 5: Prioritizing Bipartisan Bills Over Partisan Bills

- We need less partisanship and less gridlock in Congress, and more principled compromise and more progress. To encourage this result, this section would create a new provision in the House Rules to prohibit a bill from being brought to the floor for a vote unless that bill has demonstrable bipartisan support. While the House Rules Committee can waive this rule—like it can waive any rule—the Committee will have to affirmatively vote to do so, thereby promoting transparency.